



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: GLEN BOLGER
RE: VA CD 5 KEY FINDINGS MEMO
DATE: OCTOBER 30, 2010

Key Findings

- 1. After President Obama's visit to the district, Republican challenger Robert Hurt leads incumbent Democrat Tom Perriello by three points on the ballot. The lead grows among the most interested voters.***

Republican Robert Hurt has a three point lead on freshman Democratic Congressman Tom Perriello (45% Hurt/42% Perriello). Third party candidate Jeffrey Clark receives six percent of the vote and seven percent of voters are undecided.

Hurt leads 50%-39% among high interest voters – underscoring that the enthusiasm gap works in Hurt's favor. (High interest voters are those who rate their interest in the election as an 8, 9, or 10 on a scale of 1-10.)

- 2. Hurt leads Perriello by a significant margin among white voters.***

Hurt leads among white voters (58% Hurt/29% Perriello), and even with whites in the Charlottesville media market (47% Hurt/45% Perriello) – a group Perriello must do well with.

- 3. Perriello is maxed out with African American voters.***

Hurt's lead is driven entirely by white voters, as Perriello receives almost unanimous support from African Americans (0% Hurt/89% Perriello). African Americans have already "come home" to the Democrat, so there will be no Election Day boost for Perriello.

4. *President Obama's visit to the district had minimal impact, and what impact it did have was negative.*

Fully 72% of voters had heard a lot (41%) or some (31%) about President Obama coming to Charlottesville, but to the majority of voters, his visit did not matter. Just 11% of voters said Obama's campaign stop made them more likely to vote for Perriello, while 22% said it made them less likely to vote for him. Sixty-five percent (65%) said the visit made no difference to them. The impact of the visit was a net negative even in the Charlottesville media market (12% more likely/19% less likely).

The Bottom Line

The President's visit did not have the hoped-for effect. Incumbents who poll 42% of the vote the weekend before Election Day do not win, and Tom Perriello will not be an exception. Perriello has run a spirited campaign, but his consistent support of President Obama's unpopular agenda is simply too much for him to overcome.

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies conducted a telephone survey of 400 likely voters in Virginia's 5th Congressional district. The survey was conducted October 30, 2010, and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.9\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.